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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that political conflict over educational policy at the local level is cultural in its origins and represents a deep division in U.S. society about the values that should be taught in the public schools. The research reported in the paper focused on a single case study of a recall election in the Orange Unified School District (California) that occurred in June 2001. The paper states that the recall was successful in removing a conservative majority from the Board of Trustees. It explains that the conservatives had originally captured a majority in 1993 and set the policy agenda in the district for eight years. The research shows how a successful coalition to remove the Board was mobilized and how the election outcome resulted in a change in educational policy. The paper compares the single case study to other recall elections in Orange and San Diego counties. The research shows that much of the conflict was about the very legitimacy of public education. Includes one figure and six notes. (Author/BT)

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CULTURAL CONFLICT AND SCHOOL BOARD RECALL ELECTIONS

ED 479 885

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that political conflict over educational policy at the local level is cultural in its origins and represents a deep division in American society about the values that should be taught in the public schools. The research focuses on a single case study of a recall election in the Orange Unified School District that occurred in June 2001. The recall was successful in removing a conservative majority from the Board of Trustees. The conservatives had originally captured a majority in 1993 and set the policy agenda in the District for eight years. The research shows how a successful coalition to remove the Board was mobilized and how the election outcome resulted in a change in educational policy. The single case study is compared to other recall elections in Orange and San Diego Counties. The research shows that much of the conflict was about the very legitimacy of public education.

I.

Over the past century America's education system has been criticized repeatedly for failing "in its core academic mission." [1] This research argues that any such failure is less a function of education and pedagogical techniques than it is a function of politics. What emerges as a "core academic mission," or more precisely an educational ideal in the U.S., is a result of political conflict. Due to the localized nature of the delivery structure of K-12 education, political conflict at the local level produces many variations of "the ideal education." In order to understand educational policy we must first understand the nature of political conflict at the local level.

Chubb and Moe (1990) argue that improving education means changing institutions at the local level. They believe that institutional reform can channel political conflict in a way that produces a more "efficient" delivery system. We agree up to a point. Although institutional arrangements make a difference, the inherent nature of political conflict itself ensures that educational results will never be uniform. The primary political issue over which controversy exists is the extent to which parents should control the educational process. It is unlikely, given the decentralized nature of education in America, that there will ever be consensus over the proper role of the family and the state in the educational process. The institutional focus of school conflict is the local school board, and since the school board is at the center of most political conflict, we find that variation in the delivery of education as a service is a function of how the School Board manages conflict within a district. We find that variation in the delivery of

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[1] Chubb, John E. and Terry Moe, 1990. *Politics, Markets and Public Schools.* Washington, D.C.: Brookings. Pg. 1.

education (K-12) is paradoxical. Conditions for strong democratic control of schools exist when School Boards are strong and accountable; yet, strong and accountable Boards are most often accountable to special interests or specific constituencies. The Board is the focus of most political conflict because in most cases the community elects the Board. The Board's activity is almost exclusively political. The Board has responsibility for bureaucratic oversight, policy development and initiatives, budget oversight, and for setting broad goals and objectives for the school district. The success of any Board is a function of how well it is able to muster political support within the community. However, since the community is comprised of multiple competing factions (or stakeholders), coalitions are often short-lived and most issues, including important cultural issues are never permanently resolved.

In developing our argument, we examine in depth the political controversy surrounding the recall election in Orange Unified School District in June of 2001. A "conservative" Board of Trustees first won election to office in 1993. This Board was narrowly reelected in 1997. The recall election of June 2001 removed three members of the Board, and the regular election in November 2001 ratified the results of the recall and replaced two other conservative members. The Orange Unified District is a suburban district in Orange County, California serving approximately 30,000 students and a population of 250,000. [2] We realize that the conclusions of a single case study have limited generalizeability, therefore where appropriate we will compare certain

[2] The student population is comprised of about 50% white, 34% Latino, 11% Asian, and 2% black.

dimensions of the political conflict with other cases of recall that have occurred nationwide over the past five years.[3]

Our theoretical orientation begins with Peterson's (1981) typology of policy arenas. Peterson differentiates between developmental, allocational and redistributional policy. Developmental policies are those that are designed to enhance the local economy. Allocational policies refer to those basic functions that a locality must carry out on a day to day basis such as the provision of police protection, garbage collection, and the delivery of clean water. Finally, redistributional policies are those that either transfer income from the wealthy to the poor, or are perceived as detrimental to the economic well being of the community. According to Peterson, each policy leads to the development of distinctive political coalitions. On the surface, it seems that educational policy debates occur between those who advocate developmental policies and those who encourage redistribution. For example, the presence of lower tax rates and favorable tax incentives for businesses, as well as the absence of bond indebtedness, are often deemed as attractive policies designed to attract commerce to a community. On the other hand, education is inherently redistributional since older members of the community pay taxes to support children and younger families. In many cases, the demands for higher wages voiced by many teacher's unions are often viewed by opponents as detrimental to overall community welfare because higher wages translate into more redistribution. As Peterson

[3] We will, of course refer to the recall in Vista, California in1994 because some of the major participants are the same. There were also two previous recall elections in Orange County during the 1960s that share similarities with the Orange recall. A Lexis-Nexis search revealed seventeen recall elections nationwide since 1995. While it is possible that this count does not represent a complete list, it is interesting that in most of the cases there was some cultural debate that underlay the conflict, even when the recall was phrased in financial or personal terms.

observes, municipal government is the level of government least able to carry out redistributional policy.

Our paper argues that Peterson's typology may offer an inadequate explanatory framework. What might seem to be a debate about taxation and the deployment of local resources masks a more serious debate over values. The conflict over education at the local level is ultimately a conflict over who controls the curriculum and, therefore, the values taught in the public schools. Resources, such as money, are not the real focus of the debate. Money is an instrument used either to disguise or to influence a deeper political agenda. For example, when a school board keeps teacher pay a below average levels, it does so in order to gain teacher compliance with broader objectives. These objectives include the attempt to control the content of a child's education. In the case of Orange Unified, the Board of Trustees used teacher compensation as a means to restructure the very composition of the instructional pool. This Board calculated this strategy as a means to bring about changes in the substantive content of instruction.

Amy Gutmann (1987), points out that by necessity schools are in the business of moral education. The conflict surrounding curriculum and values is often a three-fold conflict between parents, school administrators, and teachers. The claim by parents of support for "back to basics" actually indicates an objection to the values currently taught by the schools. Thus we view the battles at the local level as part of a broader "culture war" that has been going on in other segments of society over the past decade. Often this battle pits teachers and administrators against parents with officials, such as board trustees in the position of attempting to diffuse the conflict. To the extent that they succeed in elevating cultural issues to the level of political conflict parents are likely to

mobilize in order to replace trustees through the electoral process. We have more to say about the precise nature of the process later in the paper, but for our purposes, the conflict at the local level is a conflict between various stakeholder groups. These groups include teachers, administrators, parents, elected trustees, taxpayers, developers, and local politicians. Each conflict involves a contest between various shifting coalitions of these various groups. Policy represents the outcome of this political conflict.

Sharp (1999) argues that cultural policy may represent yet a fourth arena of policy not considered by Peterson's typology. If so, we may not have yet developed the theoretical apparatus necessary to fully understand the process of policy formation. Sharp points out that political conflict that arises from cultural disagreements is distinct for the following reasons: First, cultural controversies are grounded in real moral concerns, thus political divisions do not necessarily cut across economic divisions. Second, the rhetoric of moral debate is often more passionate and "strident" that other political rhetoric, and compromise is more difficult to reach. Third, issues phrased in moral terms are likely to engage people who may not normally find interest in politics. Such people often do not participate in the traditional type of lobbying that characterizes normal political activity. Finally, groups not necessarily based on geography, party, or even ethnicity, frequently constitute political coalitions. Coalitions are diverse; cultural politics indeed "creates strange bedfellows." This research finds confirmation for all of these conclusions, and if we are correct in our analysis, a further elaboration of a theory of cultural conflict should emerge.

This research is important in another way. There are at least two views about educational policy. First, there are those who argue that money is not the primary

determinant of educational outcomes. That is, beyond a certain point redistribution does not create any marginal increase in the "quality" of education (Chubb and Moe, 1989). On the other hand, Levinson (1999) argues that the debate about education is really about the distribution of scarce educational resources. Frequently, more resources are required to satisfy two often-conflicting demands about education. First, there are a demand for a "back to basics" approach which presumably means a greater emphasis on substantive skills. Second, as Levinson correctly observes, unless schools teach the virtues of citizenship it is unlikely that a liberal polity will survive over the long term. The process of policy formation informs us as to how these demands are reconciled and how changes in processes and institutions may help in creating schools that can satisfy these conflicting demands.

Our overall goal is to understand how preferences about educational policy are realized. This research will focus on the electoral aspect of preference revelation. We wish to know how electoral coalitions are formed and how they become successful. Second, we want to understand how successful electoral coalitions translate political power into public policy; and third, we wish to determine how public policy influences the restructuring of electoral coalitions.

The focus on elections serves two purposes. First, it allows us to understand how elected Trustees respond to community concerns about education, and second, it allows us to create an analytical structure with the Board at the center. We conceptualize the policy process as depicted in figure 1 (see appendix). Previous research [4] has shown that communities view schools boards, in general, as an important mechanism of

[4] Danzberger, Jacqueline, P., Michael Kirst, and Michael Usdan. 1992. *Governing Public Schools: New Times, New Requirements.* Washington, D.C.: Institute for Educational Leadership.

representative government. However, we contend that this view obscures a very important paradox. If it is true that the conditions for democratic control over schools is through strong, accountable school boards, then such Boards must be generally accountable to the public rather than special interests. Yet this is not the case, Boards are generally accountable to special interests. Thus, we argue that, at times, local control of education actually subverts democratic values.

First, the Board exists within a political environment. Within this environment are conflicting ideas of the purpose of education. It is not simply what students should be taught and how teaching is financed; the issue goes beyond this simple duality. At stake is what sort of culture the educational system will reproduce.

Second, the political environment of the Board consists not only of the members of the community but by the State bureaucratic apparatus as well as teachers organizations. Conflict between these stakeholder groups influences the political environment. Various stakeholder groups have disparate notions about the purpose of education.

The research will attempt to find support for the following hypotheses:

a. School Board recall elections focus on determining the values taught in public schools.
b. Successful recall coalitions cut across party lines.
c. Successful recall coalitions depend on an increase in voter turnout.
d. Successful recall elections have an immediate impact on school board policy.
e. The existence of a "strong civic culture" within a school district facilitates the creation of a successful electoral coalition.
f. School Boards are a condition for democratic control over schools, but paradoxically, Boards are often accountable to special interests. Successful Boards will generate counter-mobilization within the community.

The remainder of the paper is divided into three parts: First, we attempt to locate the source of political conflict within the terms of democratic theories of education, all of which attempt to justify claims of educational authority. Our starting point here is the work of Amy Gutmann (1987). Second, we will examine in detail the case of Orange Unified in the terms outlined by Gutmann's analysis. Finally, we will show that from this single case there exists some support for our hypotheses.

II.

Among the toughest questions a society must answer is the question of how to educate its citizenry. A society claiming to be democratic must decide the best possible way to educate citizens in the values of democracy. Because education shapes the values and moral character of future generations, determining who should exercise the most control over the education is a difficult task. Parents, the state, and professional educators are all interested in deciding what kind of character is cultivated. Meira Levinson (1999) views the conflict as being over the tension between the values of autonomy and pluralism. In order that a liberal society exist, it is necessary that children learn the concept of autonomy. Such instruction, of course, "requires the intrusion of the state into the child's life" (p. 58). However, at the same time, the education of autonomous children "violates pluralism" by potentially denying the legitimacy of parental values. Most conflict at the local level is over whose values should prevail in the education of children. In the case of Orange Unified, the conservatives who argued that the State had exceeded its authority at the expense of parents. A conservative school

board took it upon itself to diminish the influence of liberal values in the public schools. Thus, the starting point of our analysis must be to answer the question about what kind of education legitimizes educational institutions and authority.

It is not possible to understand why a democratic theory of education is necessary with out first examining various other claims of educational authority. In her book *Democratic Education*, Amy Gutmann examines three competing theories from interpretations of Plato, John Locke, and John Stuart Mill. She calls them the *family state*, the *state of families*, and the *state of individuals*.

In the family state, there exists a belief that there is a single conception of the good life that is superior to all others. The purpose of education is to cultivate unity and like-mindedness in society by teaching all educable children what the (sole) good life is for them and by inculcating in them a desire to pursue the good life above all inferior ones. It is important to note that "the good" in the family state is not an arbitrary notion based solely on opinion. Grounded in Platonic philosophy, proponents of the family state model believe that it is possible to know "the good." Although it seems improbable that a single conception of the good could ever be discovered, it is dangerous to dismiss this argument solely on skeptical grounds, because skepticism can also be used to defeat the claim that personal and political freedoms are valuable human goods (p. 25).

Let us assume that one of Plato's "philosopher kings" does discover the nature of the "good." What happens when he returns to the cave to convince the rest of society? He may be able to convince a few, but as the allegory illustrates, most would remain unconvinced. Therefore, those who do not agree with the philosopher kings notion of the

good life[5] would be unwilling to relinquish all authority over the education of their children to him (or the state). In order for a perfectly just society to come about, a great separation would have to take place. All those who were already (wrongly) educated would have to be exiled, so that the current generation could be educated far from the dispositions of the previous. Thus, the price of achieving a society based on an objective conception of "the good" is exorbitantly high, probably higher than any of us are willing to bear.

It seems absurd to think that an all wise philosopher king or queen would ever arise, or that a just society could come about in an unjust world. However, the importance of considering the family state argument for educational authority remains important. Most importantly, examining the family state reminds us that deep pluralism exists in our society. This is not to say that some conceptions of the good are far superior to others; it is only to say that utilizing state power to constrain our choice as parents and citizens about the good life and the purpose of education is very anti-democratic. In a democratic society, all capable members should be able share in the process of social reproduction. Even those, who we feel, are wrongly educated.

The state of families, according to Gutmann, attempts to eradicate these problems. The state of families "places educational authority exclusively in the hands of parents, thereby permitting parents to predispose their children, through education, to chose a way of life consistent with their family heritage" (p. 29). This justification originates in the philosophy of John Locke, who maintained that parents are the best protectors of their children's future interests and that as parents they are free to educate their children

[5] The philosopher king's conception of the good should be thought of as the objective good. We are assuming that a wise individual has developed a conception of the good superior to all others. This does

without state interference. As we mentioned, the right of parents to educate their children is a legitimate one. However, this does not mean that they have a legitimate right to insulate their children from ways of life and viewpoints that differ from their own. Any attempt to place educational authority solely in the hands of parents mistakenly links the welfare of children with the freedom of their parents. Because children are both members of the state as well as members of their families, neither entity should enjoy complete authority over their education.

Dismissing the claims of educational authority put forth so far by the state of families and the family state we are left with the state of individuals. Many contemporary liberals, extending the philosophy of John Stuart Mill, criticize all educational authorities that threaten to bias the choices of children toward some disputed or controversial ways of life and away from others. According to Gutmann:

> "Their ideal educational authority is one that maximizes future choice without prejudicing children towards any controversial conception of the good life. The state of individuals thus responds to the weakness of both the family state and the state on families by championing the dual goals of *opportunity* for choice and *neutrality* among conceptions of the good life"(p. 34).

The most important thing for an educational authority to do, according to this view, is to provide children with the opportunity to choose freely among different conceptions of the good life. To accomplish this, the state of individuals advocates the presence of educational authorities who are more unbiased than are parents or public officials. These neural entities are "experts" or professional educators according to the state of individuals. Educational authority usually involves issues of state and parental control;

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not mean that all others in society will agree to the correct conception of the good life.

therefore, we often overlook the limitations of opportunity for choice and neutrality. Gutmann points out:

> "All sophisticated liberals recognize the practical limitation of neutrality as an educational ideal: it is, in its fullest form, unrealizable. But most fail to appreciate the value of our resistance to the ideal of unprejudiced individual freedom" (p. 35)

Even the most neutral society must limit individual freedom to ensure cultural coherence. Once we realize this, we face a difficult question: Why limit freedom to ensure cultural coherence, but not to teach children moral virtue? Which is the paramount good—the freedom to choose among different conceptions of the good life, or ensuring that children lead a life that we believe is virtuous? The fact is that we value education for teaching both freedom and virtue. The problem is determining which virtues should be taught. If educators bias children towards one conception of the good life over another, they are exerting political authority over those in society who may not agree with that conception. However, teaching neutrality, or only the virtues of free choice, does not solve this problem. By teaching neutrality educators exercise political authority over those in society who do not agree that freedom of choice is the primary purpose of education. Proponents of the state of individuals could claim that freedom rather than virtue is the correct end of education, but then they run into the same problem as the family state. Being right is not a sufficient condition for ruling because parents and citizens have a legitimate interest in passing some of their most salient values on to their children (p. 37).

So far we have examined three theories of educational authority and have found shortcomings in each. First, we rejected the family state because it attempts take exercise political authority, through a centralized state, over those who do not have the correct

knowledge of the good life. Next, we rejected the state of families because in placing educational authority solely in the hands of parents they fail to realize that children are members of the state as well as members of their family. Therefore, both the state and parents have a legitimate claim to educational authority. Finally, those who argue that we are a "state of individuals" suggest that neither the state nor parents have the right to bias a child's conception of the good life. Impartial educators that will provide children with the freedom to choose among differing conceptions of the good life should hold educational authority. There are difficulties with this argument because it is necessary to limit freedom in order to ensure cultural coherence. Neutrality does not avoid the problem of instituting an educational authority whose aims are not universally accepted among adult citizens.

What we are left with could be the foundation of a democratic theory of education, one that recognizes that states, parents, and professional educators all have important roles to play in cultivating moral character (p. 42). A democratic educational system does not guarantee virtue based on knowledge, or autonomy of families, or neutrality among ways of life. In advocating the broad distribution of educational authority among citizens, parents, and professional educators, the democratic state of education supports the core value of democracy: conscious social reproduction in its most inclusive form. Gutmann recognizes that conscious social reproduction, like any educational end, is not self evidently correct or uncontroversial. Nevertheless, it is a minimally problematic end insofar as it leaves maximum room for citizens collectively to shape education in their society. Rather than relying on neutrality among conceptions of the good life, the democratic state attempts to legitimize educational authority by

allowing all citizens to participate in the social reproduction of society. The requirement for this to occur is a reliance on civic education as Levinson observes:

> "Civic Education is also needed to teach (and has been shown to be effective in teaching) students to tolerate and respect other citizens and their differences…Toleration is one of the hallmarks of both a liberal state and the liberal citizen. The legitimacy of the liberal state rests in part on citizen's accepting that it is right to tolerate others' differences given the fact of deep pluralism" (p. 103).

Therefore, education must be about autonomy and pluralism, civic virtue and moral choice. The reluctance of a substantial number of parents to embrace this ideal has led to political conflict, and in the case of Orange Unified, a contentious recall election.

III.

The OUSD recall election of 2001 must be seen as part of a broad national debate about the legitimacy of public schools that began in the 1950s with the Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas.*[6] The immediate result of Brown was massive resistance to school integration in the South and "white flight" to the suburbs in the North (Burns 1994). The desire by the middle class to maintain the concept of a "neighborhood school" became a *causus beli* of the far right. It was early in the 1970s that Ralph Reed, then President of the Christian Coalition remarked, "We don't care who's in the Oval Office-we care who is in the principal's office." The far right understood that there was an underlying discontent among white middle class voters about integration in particular, and about what was being taught in the public schools in general. As Mike Davis (1999) has pointed out, the Right came to understand that in

[6] 347 U.S. 483 (1954)

Southern California the referendum, initiative and recall could become potent tools in electoral politics. A series of referenda in the 1960s and 70s proved that single-issue politics could successfully promote the policy agenda of the far right. [7]

Lisa McGirr (2001) points out that the far right found "fertile ground" in Orange County. She observes that migration patterns to Orange County in the 1950's and 60s brought men and women from the Midwest and the South who were by far the dominant majority of newcomers. These people tended to be individualistic and entrepreneurial. McGirr further points out that church membership during this period reflected this change. The number of fundamental and evangelical protestant churches increased much more rapidly than mainstream congregations. As McGirr observes, these new immigrants were much more interested in "personal salvation" than social gospel. The emphasis on the "personal religion" reinforced social and political individualism. It was inevitable that when local schools emphasized social values such as toleration and respect for differences, conservative parents would become concerned.

The neighborhood school, because of its extended organization such as PTA and after school activities, has always provided a natural meeting place for parents. In Orange County, as in other suburbs, there was an overlapping membership between church, school, and neighborhood, and dense social networks began to form in many parts of the County. Schools not only became a location for social interaction, they also became a place for political organization. As parents began to communicate, and organize, the focus increasingly became the content of education. Conflict over competing values became inevitable. Fundamentalists clashed not only with parents of

[7] Note the white backlash against integrated housing in (1964), against the abolition of the death penalty (1965), school busing (1979), and the revolt against property taxes in 1978.

different religions[8] but with teachers, administrators, and others who had different views of public education. Liberals, on the one hand, believe that the purpose of schools is to teach values that will lead children to become good citizens or a liberal polity. These values include, toleration, respect for diversity of opinion, reflectiveness, and autonomy (Levinson, 1999). On the other hand, conservative parents have always been suspicious of the motivations of administrators, and teachers when it comes to instruction in values. For example, in Orange Unified, divisions in the community became apparent when students organized a "Gay-Straight Alliance" on a high school campus. In an administratively skillful move, the Principal of the high school named a Mormon teacher to be the club advisor. The news quickly led to the formation of a parent's group set up to lobby the school board. The conservative school board was sympathetic to the complaining parents to the extent that the issue finally wound up in court with a Federal Judge chastising the Board of Trustees for attempting to disband the club.

Closely related to the conflict over the values that should inform public education, has been the attack by the far right on the very legitimacy of public education. This is part of a broader attack on the public sector in general. Initially, during the 1960s, conservatives viewed social movements as responsible for bringing about a decline in public institutions and a concomitant lack of public confidence in governing elite. According to conservatives, social movements forced government to undertake too many tasks, and consequently the expansion of services undermined its own authority and legitimacy (Steinfels 1979). According to conservatives, this was particularly true with

[8] One of the first cultural conflicts in Orange County schools was over "released time" Christian education. Jewish parents were quick to complain that their children, left alone in the classrooms, were stigmatized as Christian children were excused from classes. Often, one or two children might be left alone in a classroom for a period at a time.

respect to public education where teachers and administrators have departed from focus on the " 3rs." Conservatives have used the analysis of Milton Friedman (1962) to mount a continuous campaign for school vouchers, which some view as an attempt to ensure that parental values take precedence over the values of teachers and administrators. Albert Hirschman (1970) has distinguished between exit (choice) and voice in distinguishing between economic and political decision-making. Proponents of vouchers have simply given up on the idea of politics or voice. Since all decision-making structures, in one way or another, attempt to amalgamate preferences of various stakeholders or participants, the solution to the political problem of amalgamation is exit, which is the goal of voucher schemes. The goal of proponents of vouchers is to reduce the influence of teachers and administrators over the content of education by undermining the process of political formation of an educational ideal. The exit option emphasizes the Lockean ideal of a "state of families."

Friedman argues that the political process is at best "messy" and that market decision-making is a more efficient way to amalgamate preferences and create political consensus in society. Friedman states that the market greatly reduces "the range of issues that must be decided through political means, and thereby to minimize the extent to which government need participate directly in the game" (p. 15). Parents, by voting with their feet, can best determine the optimum allocation of educational resources, and ultimately the values promoted in public schools. This analysis denies that an overriding purpose to higher education exists and instead insists that the appropriate model for public schools is a "nation of families." As Friedman, and Chubb and Moe both observe, because of the monopolistic position of the schools there is little incentive for them to

improve either the quality of instruction or their responsiveness to the preferences of parents.

However, the idea of vouchers subordinates any idea of common purpose in education to the "nation of families" model. As Benjamin Barber (1992) has noted, while vouchers may enhance parental choice, they subordinate common schooling and public ends to private choices. Relying on the "exit" option as a solution to perceived declines in educational quality, ensures that public purposes, such as the education of citizens, is delegitimized, thereby questioning the very justification for public education.[9] According to Freidman, parents who object to and wish to change how the money in public schools is spent can only succeed by convincing a majority of the Board that the distribution of resources should favor "teachers and texts rather than coaches and corridors" (p. 94). This argument became a rallying cry for the right to force school boards to "stick to basics."

The case of Orange Unified seems to confirm everything we have talked about thus far. The debate over the content and quality of public education masked a deeper conflict over cultural values that found its focus in Orange Unified. The political conflict emerged in the early 1990s just as the demographics of the population started to change. For example, in 1996 33% of the residents of Orange called themselves "middle of the road" versus 26% in 1990. Those who called themselves "very conservative" declined from 13% to 9%. Despite this apparent shift in ideology in the district, by the 1993 the conservatives had gained majority control of the seven-member school board. In the 1997 election two moderates were defeated by conservative women, another conservative

[9] For a further development of this point see, Neiman, Max and Stephen J. Stambough 1998. "Rational Choice Theory and The Evaluation of Public Policy." *Policy Studies Journal 26*: 449-465.

won an open seat, and two conservatives were returned for second terms. Thus, conservatives solidly held a majority of five seats. Also noteworthy is the fact that the two other members of the Board often voted with the conservative majority. Conservatives won the 1997 election against four candidates heavily financed by the Teachers Union, which contributed $15,000 to each of the four defeated candidates. Although conservatives received far less financing they were guided by political consultants and an organization known as the Education Alliance, which acted as a front organization for several groups including Ralph Reed's group that had been successful in San Diego County. The election was bitterly fought and close. In one area, only 229 votes separated the two candidates out of nearly 18,000 cast.

Two issues were contested in the District prior to the election and it is likely that these issues influenced the election results. First, in 1996 the conservative Board began a campaign designed to "wipe out" what was referred to as "social engineering" in the schools and return to a "back to basics" approach. Their first target was the Head Start Program at Lampson Elementary School in one of the poorer parts of the District. The Principal of the school had successfully applied for several Federal grants that were used, among others things, to furnish needy children with nutritious meals and dental care. The Board immediately voted to disallow the use of grants on the grounds that "taking Federal money was like taking drugs." Their refusal to allow the use of grants inflamed the community, which then held several large public meetings at which critics and defenders of the Board voiced their opinions. It was out of these meetings that potential candidates emerged that would challenge the incumbents in the 1997 election.

The other issue was bilingual education. The coalition that formed to challenge the Board in 1997 coalesced around several issues including bilingual education. Although not all opponents of the Board supported bilingual education, the incumbent Board to placed an advisory statement on the ballot. By placing the advisory statement on the ballot, the Board was able to associate challengers with support for bilingual education. It appears that the strategy was successful as turnout in affluent neighborhoods ranged from 21% to 31% while less affluent neighborhoods and Hispanic neighborhoods averaged between 7% and 21% turnout. While we cannot be sure that the advisory initiative was decisive, conservatives did much better in affluent neighborhoods. At the end of the 1997 election, five conservatives (and two moderates that tended to vote conservative on some issues) constituted the Board. Certainly, as the demographic data show, this board was not representative of the changing population in the OUSD.

The appeal of conservatism in Orange County was based on the two core principles of modern conservatism: the primacy of the locality in shaping public life and resentment against "big government," and the idea that liberalism fostered values antithetical to "traditional morals and values." Conservatives believed as early as the 1950s that the way to purify local communities was through control of institutions such as the public school. Lisa McGirr for example, documents the earliest example of recall in Orange County in the early 1960s. A "liberal" school board president was successfully recalled in the Anaheim school district. The immediate concern of the organizers of the recall was that the president was also a member of the ACLU. Ralph Reed and the Christian Coalition succeeded in San Diego County in the early 1990s in placing conservatives on school boards, and Orange was their next target. Men and women in Orange organized

into an organization called the Education Alliance. They were successful in electing a person to the Orange Country Board of Education and three members to the OUSD Board in 1993. This group had ties to local Evangelical churches as well as the local Republican Party. The Education Alliance was a nationwide organization funded in part by Billionaire Howard Ahmanson, and local conservative groups such as the Lincoln Club, an organization of Republican businessmen and women who funded Republican and conservative causes.

Once in the majority, the Board attempted to establish a "back to basics" curricula, and rejected any attempt at "social engineering" in the school. The Alliance, speaking through Board members made frequent comments in the Press such as "Social Studies Curricula are anti-European, and "socialist-oriented." There was also a successful effort to end busing of district Hispanic children to white schools. However, in some of their more radical intrusions into the day to day instruction in the schools the Board was challenged and it was a result of these challenges that opposition began to mobilize.

At this point, we follow William Riker's analysis of the natural selection of political issues (1982).Riker argues that members of a voting body succeed because like entrepreneurs they are able to create "new platforms and alternatives" that appeal to the tastes of at least a portion of the electorate. They must constantly find issues on which a winning coalition can coalesce. It is always the hope of leaders to press for new issues and new agendas that will be more salient than the old. The chief characteristic of the democratic process is that they are aware that other entrepreneurs exist and will always attempt to upset the existing equilibrium. The OUSD Board understood the strategy of

issue selection and when their initial assault on curriculum and the social structure of the schools failed, they required another issue that could galvanize support around their agenda. Since they realized the Teacher's Association opposed many of the Board decisions, the strategy became one of mobilizing a coalition against teachers.

The veteran teachers in the District resisted the Board from its initial pursuit of its "values" agenda. For the most part the veteran teachers had tenure, leaving the Board with few resources with which to pressure the teachers or to retaliate against them. Finally, they adopted the strategy of attacking the teachers indirectly in the name of fiscal responsibility. They believed that this issue could provide the basis for forming an alliance with the affluent white voters in the district who made up the majority of the voters in school board elections. These voters were concerned about issues such as taxes. Proposition 13, passed in 1978, shaped the political attitudes of affluent homeowners in Orange.[10] What the Board did not realize, was that the demographics of Orange were changing. New housing developments in eastern Orange and Anaheim Hills were designed for younger families, many of whom still had children in the schools. Thus, this group became potential coalition partners for proponents of recall. For example, a Chapman University Poll conducted in 2001 found that 55% of the residents in Orange would support a school bond issue. Newer residents, often from out of the state, had not yet experienced the anti-government rhetoric that characterizes conservatives in Orange County. For example, the same survey showed that more than half the residents thought

[10] Often members of the Board and its coalition cite the fact that bond indebtedness might result in liens placed on houses.

the performance of government in Orange was good or excellent, but less than half had confidence in the School Board.[11]

The target coalition for the conservatives became the affluent homeowners whose children were no longer in the schools as well as developers and other members of the "growth machine," who typically were anti-tax and anti-union. These constituencies were also deeply embedded in the Republican Party. When the exclusive focus on social issues backfired, the goal of the Board was to unite social conservatives with anti-tax, anti union conservatives. As Riker further points out, "the difficult task of putting together a winning coalition is the constant occupation of would-be political leaders. The fundamental dynamic of political life is their restless search for the issues and alternatives around which a new winning coalition can coalesce" (p. 209). The conservative Board felt that they found such an issue in the teacher's retirement plan. There are always many issues available for political entrepreneurs, but the goal is to find one that will mobilize a winning coalition.

In 1976, the Orange Unified School District had been suffering from mismanagement, a series of scandals involving embezzlement, and bid rigging. In a series of negotiations with the Teacher's Unions, the teachers agreed to limit salary increases in exchange for lifetime health benefits for themselves and their spouses. At the time, the teachers thought this was necessary in order to assist the District regain firm financial footing. In order to provide for the benefits a trust fund was set up that was to be funded by salary "give-backs" of the teachers. As conservatives gained control of the Board, they simply refused to fund the trust.[12] In 1995 the Board commissioned and

[11] *Orange County Register*, May 28, 1998.
[12] *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 2000.

released The Epler Report. The Board claimed that the report showed that the district owed $195 million to the teacher's retirement fund and would go bankrupt unless the fund was eliminated. Despite the fact that the report actually stated that the large figure was based on actuarial projections over 75 years, the board used the report as a basis to pressure the Union during salary negotiations. In particular the Board used these figures as leverage against tenured and veteran teachers. In 1997 the Board declared a "hiring emergency" and imposed a salary schedule that gave raises of up to 20% to teachers with less than seven years of experience while virtually ignoring veteran teachers. The Board's tactics worked and the more experienced teachers began leaving the District in substantial numbers. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that during the 1999-2000 school year alone, 241 teachers in the district resigned.[13] By 2000, 25% of the District's teachers were uncredentialed versus 11% statewide. One of the members of the Board was quoted as saying, "I think a lot of the teachers who are teaching on emergency permits will be excellent teachers...with the support programs we have, whether they are fully qualified teachers or not, our children do not go without help and they receive an excellent education."

Teacher pay and fiscal responsibility thus became the issue that the Board used to unite a coalition and win a contested election in 1997 by placing three additional conservative members onthe Board. Although it would appear that there were two issues driving the election culture and finance, in reality the financial issue simply was a means by the Board to achieve their cultural agenda.

Up until 1997 the Board had formed an alliance with the Education Alliance (a conservative front organization), local Republican politicians, and in addition, had the

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[13] July 30, 2000

unceasing support of a local, for profit Newspaper, *The Foothill Sentry*. The *Sentry* was very effective in reaching all the affluent residents of Orange with the anti-union pro-trustee position. The Board practiced what Riker (1986) refers to as the art of heresthetics. According to Riker, heresthetics is about "structuring the world so you can win"(ix). If a person or coalition expects to lose on issues, then the ultimate device is to divide the majority with a new alternative. This, in turn, produces a new majority coalition. The teachers, and the other opponents of the Board, were unable to mobilize around a winning issue in 1997. The Board had already upstaged them by co-opting the fiscal responsibility issue. Moreover, although the teachers funded four candidates in the election, they were unable to overcome the heresthetical use of issues employed by the Board.

While Riker alerts us to issues and the political environment, it is also important to comment about the internal structure of group mobilization. The Teachers Union, in the 1997 was generally acting alone, and not as Jack Walker (1991) has referred to as a "patron." Walker points out that it is unlikely that many potential groups either mobilize or counter-mobilize without patronage from the top. However, a patron must not necessarily be perceived as the primary beneficiary of any policy change. The Board had patronage from the Education Alliance and ultimately, the local Republican Party. The teachers learned, after the 1997 election, that they too needed to act as patrons in order to mobilize a broader community coalition.

Before turning to the phenomena of counter-mobilization, it is important to understand the electoral context. Piven and Cloward (2000) have challenged the consensus view of social scientists that apathy and lack of political skill on the part of the

poorer segments of the population are the causes of low voter turnout. Instead they argue that, "Apathy and a lack of political skill were a consequence, not a cause, of the party strategies and political culture, which were sustained by legal and procedural barriers to electoral participation. In sum, the political system determined whether participation is predicated on class-related resources and attitudes" (p. 43). In short, they argue that the governing elites construct political institutions to discourage participation. This certainly seems to have been the problem in Orange. First, in the 1980s, school board elections no longer corresponded to the state and federal election cycle, but rather occurred in odd numbered years. Hence, Board elections were seldom held in conjunction with any other election. This was done deliberately to depress turnout since it is very difficult to mobilize voters with information about electoral importance in off years. For example, if we consider only the poorest segment of the district in the statewide election before 1997, turnout was 18%. In 1997, the turnout in the same area was 7.1%. The Newspapers and TVs tend to limit coverage of off-year elections.

The second structural impediment to voting was the actual procedure for candidate eligibility and voter choice. Elections followed an "at-large" format meaning the District was divided into seven areas, and while each candidate must reside in the area in which she runs, she is elected by the voters in all seven areas. Therefore, a voter not only votes for the trustee from his or her area but from the other areas as well. Clearly, the areas with the highest turnout dilute the votes of those living in areas with low turnouts.[14] The Christian Coalition learned from their successes in 1989 and 1990 that a small cohesive coalition could dominate local electoral politics. Reed's operatives visited

[14] See John Rossman's article, "At-large Local Elections Make a Mockery of Democracy." *The Los Angeles Times*. October 20, 1996.

Orange and gave seminars at churches showing how to use "at-large" elections. The analysis of Piven and Cloward seems to be correct, and it confirms another point I have made previously about the Right Wing: it has attempted and continues to attempt to de-legitimize public institutions and political participation.

The electoral obstacle was a difficult one to overcome. Citizens in the Latino sections of the District were already intimidated by the white power structure as a result of Proposition 187 and the attack by the Board in 1996 on bilingual education. Generally, potential coalition members would attempt to increase turnout in less and focus on herestitically splitting the conservative coalition. However, in the 1997 election the Board approved an advisory statement on the ballot that essentially stated that the District should end bilingual education. Again, this had the effect of increasing the turnout of the conservative coalition and diminishing the turnout in the Latino districts. In 1997, three new conservative members were elected to the Board, replacing two moderates and filling an open seat.

The mobilization of electoral coalitions and the natural selection of issues are closely related. Although the Teacher's Union was the patron of the challengers to the Board in 1997, the only group that they worked with was a group called the Community Network of Education. This group was narrow, made up primarily of teachers, some members of a legislative watch-dog group, and a few concerned citizens who were alarmed about the social direction of the Board. Only one new candidate outside this narrow coalition was advanced, and he was very little known to the coalition, but well-known to the Union. Crucial to the success of any challenge would be expansion of the coalition, and the successful use of an issue that could split the Board coalition. As Riker

points out, the political world is not completely random and there is some regularity to the natural selection of issue. Losers always have the ability to reframe events in a way that can help them split the coalition. We previously mentioned an earlier recall election in Anaheim in the early 1960s. The Conservatives attempted to change the agenda propagated in the schools after they gained control of the Board. Among other things, the Board declared that the United Nations was not a fit topic for discussion in the classroom. The initial revolt against the Board came from seven of eight principals in the District that resigned along with a number of teachers. Thus, opponents of the Board highlighted the potential decline in educational standards due to the loss of key personnel. Similarly, in Orange Unified the losers used the exodus of teachers during salary negotiations as a way to mobilize new coalition members. Losers were now able to associate the loss of personnel with a decline in educational quality. This enabled the opposition to attract new coalition members, particularly from younger families who had recently moved into the District.

In addition to teacher exodus, a popular Superintendent resigned in 1999. A combination of this resignation and the political pressure on teacher pay began to revitalize the opposition. The key to the successful organization in the District, for both the conservatives and their opponents, was a "thick" civic culture, excluding, of course the poorer districts. Teachers, who lived in the District, were often members of church groups and other civic organizations and therefore encountered a number of citizens in these organizations. New families were moving into the district and many of these parents were younger, with children in school, and primarily concerned about teacher quality. The Union remained a supplier of funds and of overlapping membership, but it

was the initiative of parents, particularly in the Anaheim Hills area, that was key to broadening the coalition. Another group, Kids First, was a group formed by a teacher in Yorba Linda school, and he began an email network which was instrumental to the maintenance of interest and support. Soon an Anaheim Hills parents group joined this group, and together they revived the old Community Network for education. All of these groups were eventually consolidated into a group called the Kids First which was sort of a front organization and information clearing house for all of the diverse opposition groups in the District. The issue that all members of the coalition could settle on was the teacher exit issue. The Board tried to frame contentious salary negotiations as a Union issue, but the opposition prevented this accusation from gaining ground by insisting that the exodus of teachers represented a real threat to the quality of education in the District.

A teacher's strike and the continued resignation of teachers continued to dramatize the problems with school board governance. The opposition coalition decided in 2001 that the time was ripe to attempt a recall election. Three conservative members of the Board were targeted. Two of the three were in their second terms and were among the original conservatives elected when the Education Alliance began its electoral strategy. Three members were targeted because only three strong candidates emerged, and they happened to live in the same areas as the three most conservative members. It was always difficult to recruit from the Garden Grove part of the District, which is largely poor and Hispanic. However, a candidate emerged, John Ortega, himself a Hispanic working as a deputy sheriff in Orange County. The Republican power structure in the County quickly noted this and immediately put pressure on the Sheriff, Mike

Carona, to discourage Ortega. Although this accusation is difficult to prove, Ortega did not campaign, nor did he spend money. Yet the trustee in his area was defeated by the largest margin of any of the other two.

The recall was successful, and in the November election, the victorious candidates from the recall election were re-elected and the other two conservative trustees were defeated. The chronology of events takes us from conservative victories in 1993 and 1997, to a successful recall in 2001, and ends with a confirmation election in November of 2001. It now remains to determine what this sequence of events tells us about our original hypotheses.

IV.

First, we hypothesized that political conflict in school districts in general, and recall elections in particular, are ultimately about what values are to be taught in the public schools. To employ Gutmann's analysis, the debate may be phrased in terms of a conflict between a "family state" and a "state of families." In the family state, there is some agreement as to the values taught in the public schools. A deep division over the purpose of public education characterizes the conflict in OUSD. The division in the community was evident in the debate over the "Gay-Straight Alliance," and in the constant reference by conservatives to the "back to basics" mission of the public schools. It was this issue, as well as the issue over Federal grants that began to open the fissures about education that were always under the surface.

In OUSD, the race also created a cleavage in the community. In the mid-1990s, the principal of an all white school in an affluent neighborhood initiated a dialogue with the principal of a minority dominated overcrowded school to discuss whether some students could be diverted to the affluent school where facilities were being underutilized. The distance between the two schools was not particularly great, but the overcrowded school was primarily Hispanic. The conservative board immediately overturned this idea. The Board also used, as we have seen, the bilingual issue in an attempt to drive a wedge between potential members of the opposition coalition. However, race is only a cover for a more fundamental dispute over values. In general, those who are not conservative accept that respect for diversity and toleration are important values that should be taught in the public schools. Conservatives, opposed to what they consider liberal values, support a model that is more in line with a "state of families," a model that suggests that it is the duty of parents to impart important social values to students. This is a primary reason why conservatives prefer the exit, rather than the voice option. That is why they prefer the exit, rather than the voice option. The Alliance was created in OUSD in 1994 to fight for Proposition 174 which was the first voucher initiative. When the Initiative failed the Alliance decided that if "exit" was not feasible, they would use voice to change the content of public education, and that was their goal both in San Diego and in OUSD.

We next hypothesized that a winning coalition in a recall campaign must cut across party lines. Support for this hypothesis is highly conjectural. It is true that the Republican Party strongly supported the incumbent Board, and that even the local Assemblyman Bill Campbell donated his own money to the campaign of the

conservatives.[15] Campbell was influential in keeping Republicans united during the recall election. Yet, in many cases, teachers who were Republicans voted for recall. In studying the election data, it appears that the most heavily Republican areas voted against recall. The three most affluent areas in the District, two in Villa Park and one in Eastern Orange, are heavily Republican. These three areas had the highest turnout of any area in the District, and all voted against recall. As we have seen, turnout was lowest in the poorest areas of the District. Given these two circumstances, how can we account for the success of the recall?

The difference in the recall election may be found in the precincts in Anaheim. It is in these areas that new housing was built between 1997 and 2001 and more new, younger families moved into the area during that time period. In 1997, the conservative Jacobson won three of nine precincts in a very close election, yet in the recall election he lost every precinct. Turnout in the Anaheim precincts increased from 8.4% in 1997 to 9.1% in 2001. This may not seem significant, but when you consider that Jacobson won in 1997 by only 229 votes out of 18,000 ballots cast, incremental changes seem to have made a big difference. The conservative Aschoff lost all precincts in this area, and the conservative Davis lost all after winning three in 1997. Jacobson lost the recall by about 2000 total votes, Aschoff by 300 votes and Davis by 600. Therefore, we can conclude that slight changes make a big difference in low-turnout races, and given the dominance of Republican registration in all areas, except the poorest, there is some indication that some Republicans, particularly in Anaheim voted for recall.

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[15] According to the Registrar of Voters the Campbell Family trust donated $100 to Davis and $100 to Jacobson in the 1997 campaign.

Aside from changes in demographics, it is also important to note that a strong candidate ran against Jacobson in the recall. Melissa Smith was from Anaheim Hills, an assistant Pastor in a church, with children in the Orange schools and a community activist. She successfully used her contacts from both church and school to mount an effective campaign. Kathy Moffat, a Democrat, living in a Republican area was also successful. Her success, like Smith's was a result of her participation in the broader community. She was well-liked even by Republicans. In the November election, Kim Nichols won against another conservative. Kim was not recruited, but was a concerned parent who was active in PTA and other parent groups. Three strong candidates with broad community appeal emerged, as opposed to the other candidates recruited by the Union.

Third, we hypothesized that a successful recall campaign depends on increasing voter turnout. On aggregate, that does not seem to be the case in 2001. Turnout in 1997 was 20.1% in the recall election 21%, and 18.8% in the confirmation election in November of 2001 that also resulted in the defeat of two additional conservative members of the Board. In fact, in the least affluent area, the area most impacted by the grant programs we discussed earlier, turnout actually dropped from about 7% in 1997 to 3.5% in the recall election. In the most affluent areas, turnout actually increased over the 1997 election. In the 30 most populous districts in Orange, 17 voted for Jacobson in 1997 and 16 voted for recall in 2001; but turnout increased in these districts from 16.2% in 1997 to 20.65 in the recall. Therefore, it may be that there is partial support for this hypothesis since the most populous precincts increased turnout significantly, and were about even for and against Jacobson in 1997 but shifted against him in the recall. It is

also true that many teachers live in this area. The conventional wisdom is that high turnout favors liberals and low turnout favors the conservative strategy. However, our evidence suggests that candidates, issues and mobilization all play a role important roles in electoral outcomes. Money does not seem to be a factor; both sides were adequately financed, although the Teachers Union who contributed under their own name in 1997, contributed in 2001 through an organization called Orange Unified Citizens for Quality Education. It appears that the Union decided that the strategy of playing the Patron was more effective than direct recruitment and financing. It appears that in the most affluent districts the conflict over values attracted adherents equally on both sides. The equal division in Villa Park for example, reflects the nearly equal division of the rest of country over cultural issues.

Fourth, we hypothesized that successful elections have an immediate impact on public policy. This was true in earlier elections in Orange County and it was true immediately after the recall. Among the immediate changes was a shift in attitudes toward the teachers from adversarial to helpful. This included raises and a change in the negotiating teams. On June 6, 2002, the Executive Director of the Union praised the new Board for reaching a salary agreement with teachers. Union members voted 91% in favor of the new contract. The new salaries made Orange competitive with other districts after ranking at the bottom in 1997. [16]Other specific changes included change of the election cycle, reorganization of district, and the rehiring of the former superintendent. In addition, trustees began programs of outreach not only to parents but also to teachers and school administrators. A new financial report was commissioned and generally affirmed the view that higher teacher salaries were affordable.

Fifth, we hypothesized that the existence of a "strong civic culture" within a school district facilitates the creation of successful electoral coalitions. The existence of neighborhood groups, schools and related activities, and civic organizations makes mobilization much easier. Overlapping memberships lead to the existence of multiple channels of communication by which transmission of important information about issues and events occurs. The existence of a strong civic culture can lead to higher turnout in traditionally low turnout elections, as the importance of issues is communicated through community networks. We would suggest, although we do not have conclusive evidence, that the existence of a strong civic culture in affluent areas such as Villa Park accounts for the large differences in turnout between the most affluent and the poorest areas. The Director of the YMCA, who was very active in the recall campaign, provided some support. She pointed out that a lack of funding was an obstacle to the formation of after-school programs in the least affluent areas. Most after school programs are funded, in part, by fees. Grants could help establish these programs in poor areas, but the conservative Board consistently voted against such grants. After school programs are an important meeting place for adults, and a natural venue for face to face contact that makes civic culture possible. Although an area is supposed to represented by a resident, at-large voting, lack of civic culture both play a role in depressing turnout. The needs of the poor were often ignored in Board policy.

Finally, our research demonstrates that while elected School Boards are a condition for democratic control over schools, often Boards are accountable to special interests. Amy Gutmann has correctly observed that "citizens and public officials can use democratic processes to destroy democracy" (p. 15). School Boards, which are at the

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[16] *Orange City News*, June 13, 2002

center of public governance of schools, can be controlled to impose the educational ideal of only certain parents on the educational process. It is, as Gutmann points out, a balancing problem. The preferences of parents must be considered but not to the extent that these preferences undermine the very foundations of American democracy. Robert Thoburn's book *The Children Trap* has served as sort of a guidebook for the far right. The book is a diatribe against public education and the values that public education needs to produce in order to replicate a democratic society. The diatribe is not simply about sex education, but about toleration, diversity, moral responsibility, and other values that are necessary for liberal society. However, although the State has an interest in certain values, many conservatives (as well as liberals) argue that the State must not be overly intrusive in family life.

The key concerns of conservative parents in Orange were about what values should be tolerated, who children should associate with, and how far can government go in promoting an atmosphere that fosters pluralism and equal respect for others.

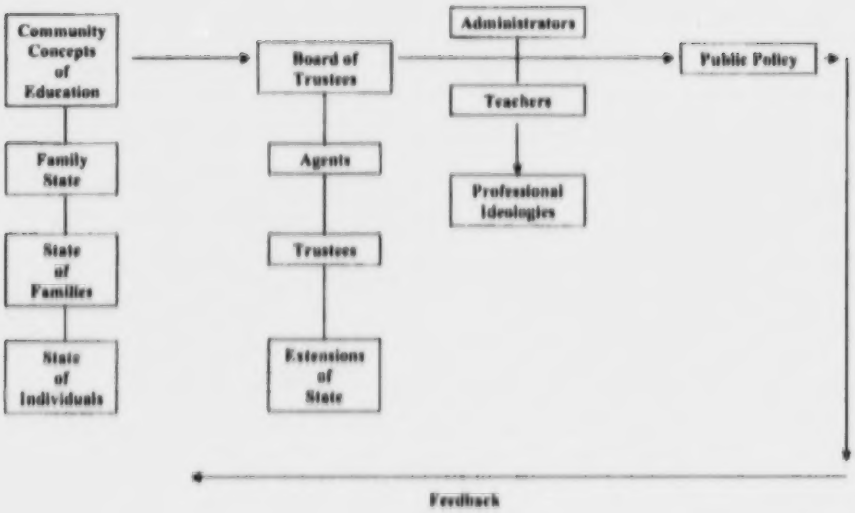
V.

The cultural conflict in OUSD reflects the current deep divide in our national culture. On the one hand, conservatives have, since the Reagan years, consistently regarded government programs and institutions as representing little more than opportunities for mass corruption. At the local level, the distrust of the public sector translates into a very narrow conception of the function of public institutions such as schools. The distrust of public institutions casts doubt on their very legitimacy, and

ultimately the legitimacy of the democratic process. An institution, such as a school, can hardly function without the support of citizens. When many citizens question the legitimacy of the mission, or opt to leave it altogether, it is difficult to see how these institutions can endure.

Furthermore, conservatives in Orange, like conservatives nationwide tend to be religious and extremely concerned with questions of morality. The emphasis on morality leads to framing all political issues in moral terms. When this occurs, compromise is difficult to achieve. The religious orientation of the conservative tends to be evangelical and individualistic. Thus, conservatives are quite skeptical of any values that are broadly shared by members of a local community. When the educational system reinforces community values, conservatives often consider instruction to be an intrusion on the moral superiority of the family. Gutmann understands the nature of the conflict better than anyone does. Despite the concerns of conservatives, public education must not only include reinforcement of the concept of toleration, but also must ensure that students learn to honor the basic liberties and opportunities of others (1995).

Figure 1.



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